



## Kit for New Parents Available to Order Online



In an effort to provide more flexibility for new parents, First 5 California (F5CA) has made the *Kit for New Parents* available for ordering online. The *Kit* is a free and valuable collection of important information for all new parents and caregivers. It is available in English, Cantonese, Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese.

[Ordering online is just a click away.](#) Located on the F5CA Parents website, this new option has already fulfilled more than 600 *Kit for New Parents* orders!

Please note: organizations requiring bulk orders of the *Kit* should contact their local First 5 county commission, or call F5CA at (916) 263-1348. \*

## Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



Happy Back to School time, and while we can't quite celebrate that summer is over (or should I say hot weather), fall is on its way—Yahoo! As vacations wind down and fall activities gear up, First 5 California is busy working and planning for the 2016–17 year and beyond.

Coming up quickly is our 2016 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit—November 8–10, 2016. Inside this issue of *FOCUS*, we have an article that brings you up to speed on our speakers and other Summit details. I just want to add a plug if you or anyone you know would like

to help sponsor the Summit, there is information on the website.

In addition, this issue contains updates and information on several topics of note, including the *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign, the First 5 Express Tour, "Books Across America," a look into First 5 Amador County's commitment to literacy, and an update on current legislative issues.

A little closer to home, we recently partnered with First 5 Los Angeles and our Early Childhood Education Coalition partners to co-host an event recognizing the California Legislative Women's Caucus as our "Champions for Children." The Legislative Women's Caucus, chaired by State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, made increases in child care access and quality their number one priority in this year's state budget debates. Their leadership helped children and families

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In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 17 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

## Talk. Read. Sing. It changes everything® Campaign Update



March 2014 marked the beginning of a new campaign for First 5 California—and it started with three simple words: *Talk. Read. Sing.*®

Today, those words have driven our statewide initiative to become a bona fide movement—one that has caught on and been endorsed by countless spokespeople, celebrities, sports figures, bloggers, social media influencers, and more.

On August 15, 2016, we rolled out a new set of bilingual television commercials to further support our key early brain development message. The new ads feature real parents and their children, most of whom have benefitted from First 5 programs. The messages reinforce early verbal interactions and offer simple ideas on how to talk, read, and sing together anytime, anywhere, from the moment a child is born. These new spots can be seen statewide on television, online, and through a variety of social media. ✱

## Camille's Corner (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



make strategic gains in the state budget. While this event acknowledged our successes and gains made in early care and education budget and policy, all the honorees and Coalition members recognized how much more is needed to provide a high-quality early learning and care environment for all the children who will benefit from it.

The celebration was emceed First 5 Los Angeles Executive Director Kim Belshé. One of our special guests was Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, who spoke to attendees and reiterated his commitment to early care and education, children, and their families.

Several legislators commented that they were heartened to see, more than ever before, a motivated, unified early learning field that has come together to create a force for children and families in California.

Although we allowed ourselves a brief pause to enjoy our wins, the gathering reaffirmed our commitment on children and family issues as there is more work to do. Providing the public and our leaders with more information will allow them to make informed policy decisions that will positively impact our collective future. As a whole, we will continue to lead the way in resource availability, and information gathering and dissemination, including the latest studies on child development and brain science. This is just another reason not to miss the upcoming Summit!

Huge thanks and congratulations to everyone for their exemplary work this past year. Here's to the future!

Enjoy some pictures of our celebration. ✱



# California State Budget Chips Away at Barriers to Quality Childcare

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Once again, the final state Budget Act for FY 2016–17 contains significant developments in the early learning field. The Legislature rejected the Governor’s Early Learning Block Grant proposal and negotiated a comprehensive early learning investment package that emphasized ongoing, per-child funding increases to all child care reimbursement rates to make up for losses during the recession. The full, four-year early learning budget package is \$527 million in increases in per-child funding rates for all child care programs, beginning January 1, 2017, and 8,877 new full-day California State Preschool Program (State Preschool) slots, all to be phased in over four years.

This budget win is significant, despite its modest single-year investments. The budget represents the first firm commitment from this administration to include increases for early learning in a future January budget. Both the slot and rate increases negotiated over a multi-year period will help lift the starting point for future budget advocacy. Also, the multi-year commitment helps address the minimum wage along with the Great Recession’s impacts to all early learning programs’ per pupil funding rates—a huge achievement that may clear the way for other budget priorities such as eligibility, access, and quality to take center stage in the upcoming years.

However, to the great disappointment of many advocates and families, the final Budget Act does not include any changes to family eligibility or continuity. As a result, First 5 California (F5CA) redoubled its advocacy

efforts on AB 2150 (Santiago), which would have modernized eligibility thresholds for all early learning programs and guaranteed 12-month child care assistance in state-funded, early learning programs, consistent with new federal laws. Unfortunately, AB 2150 failed to pass, leaving eligibility as a central issue in future budget and policy debates.

Fortunately, early learning promises to keep its place in the state budget spotlight as two significant voices in the Legislature continue to call for action. First, a commitment has been made by the Legislative Women’s Caucus to again hold child care as a top priority for the next two-year legislative session, including the issues of eligibility expansion and access expansion for children ages 0 to 3, neither of which was addressed in the final budget package.

In addition, in response to the Governor’s Early Learning Block Grant reforms, Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon announced his intent to launch a Blue Ribbon Commission on early learning as a follow-up to the budget negotiations. This Commission would be tasked with producing an early learning systems plan for California. F5CA staff and partners are working with Assembly staff to determine how best to support and inform this new Commission process. The Commission’s product will hopefully provide a road map for building a stronger, more comprehensive, high-quality early learning system for all California’s children, and how to best invest scarce resources in this crucial foundation for lifelong success. ✱

## Did You Know?

### Paid Family Leave Benefits Available to Parents and Caretakers

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In 2002, California became the first and one of the very few states nationwide to provide paid benefits to new parents so they can stay home and bond with a new child. Paid Family Leave, administered by California’s Employment Development Department (EDD), helps provide financial support to working parents for up to six weeks.

Many families are not in a financial position to take six weeks of vacation or even unpaid leave to bond with a new child. This benefit, fully paid for through payroll deduction of all workers in California, is extremely valuable as it replaces 55 percent of an employee’s wages, up to a capped amount. With the passage of AB 908 (Gomez) this year, beginning in 2017, the benefits

will increase to 70 percent for the lowest wage earners and 60 percent for all others, with a maximum capped benefit still in force.

Paid Family Leave provides the opportunity for parents to bond with a newborn, newly adopted, or foster child. This benefit provides parents with the opportunity to set the right path in their child’s life by nurturing, talking, and interacting with children during the first three years of life. The opportunity to engage and influence a child provides a valuable path that will last a lifetime.

For more information on Paid Family Leave, parents and other interested parties can visit the EDD’s website at [www.edd.ca.gov/disability](http://www.edd.ca.gov/disability). ✱

## July 2016 Commission Meeting Highlights

The State Commission's most recent quarterly meeting took place in Sacramento on July 28. Action items included the following:

Approval of Commission meeting dates for 2017

- January 26 in Sacramento
- April 27 in Sacramento
- July 27 in Sacramento
- October 26 in Southern California

Approval of up to \$20 million to conduct a Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot from Fiscal Year 2016–17 to 2020–21

The Pilot will focus on four priority areas:

- Culturally responsive and effective teaching strategies, curricular approaches, and professional development to promote dual language acquisition and optimize home language
- Proven practices to empower and partner with families of DLLs
- Appropriate child and program assessment tools
- Messaging

Through this investment, First 5 California (F5CA) has the opportunity to build a heightened level of awareness

and responsibility for early learning professionals to implement culturally and linguistically responsive practices while engaging families. Pilot efforts will identify scalable, effective, high-quality supports and services specifically designed for young DLLs so they thrive in early learning settings and beyond. With the approval of this item, F5CA currently is in the process of developing a Request for Proposal for the pilot.

Another highlight of the meeting was an information item summarizing existing and potential future efforts by F5CA and counties that focus on Preventing the Achievement Gap. During the item presentation, staff outlined strategies consistent with the F5CA Strategic Plan and First 5 funding, partnerships, and advocacy for preparing California's most vulnerable children for success in school. Staff proposed the Commission take a deeper look at the F5CA Strategic Plan for effective areas in which targeted advocacy, partnerships, and leveraged funding efforts to narrow the opportunity gap and the resulting achievement gap can be continued or strengthened. A Commission retreat early in 2017 will provide the opportunity for a Strategic Plan review. ✱

## First 5 Express Tour

First 5 California's (F5CA) interactive bilingual exhibit, the First 5 Express, will embark on a new tour across California beginning August 31, 2016. The primary goal is to inspire families with children, ages five and younger, to make informed choices when it comes to their children and to understand the importance of a child's earliest years.

Building on last year's momentum, the First 5 Express will again focus on talking, reading, and singing with children from day one, and the impact this verbal engagement has on early brain development. Activities are geared toward engaging children and their families in fun *Talk. Read. Sing.*® behaviors that inspire the continuation of these activities at home. Giveaway items will be available for all visitors of the First 5 Express, providing resources needed to help sustain that healthy behavior change.



All-new exhibit graphics, exciting activities, and more will be unveiled as the First 5 Express makes its first stop in Orange County.

The tour schedule, which lists exact locations and times, will soon be posted on the F5CA Parents [website](#). We look forward to another engaging tour across the state. ✱

# Amador County—From “The Gold Country” to “Literacy-Rich”

Nina Machado, Executive Director, First 5 Amador County

Reading regularly with children during their earliest years is considered by many to be one of the easiest and most significant boosts to a child’s life as it prepares them for a lifetime of learning. In an effort to expand literacy opportunities and provide support to child and caregiver bonding, First 5 Amador (F5A) became an affiliate with the Imagination Library, a program created by Dolly Parton in 1996 that provides children with a monthly, age-appropriate book, free of charge, from birth until their fifth birthday.

F5A launched into this collaboration in 2009, which costs \$25 per child, per year. F5A’s investment is recouped countless times over with a lifetime benefit of literate children who receive positive, loving, and educational interactions with their parent or caregivers.

F5A funds and administers the Imagination Library countywide and helps promote the program among community partners. The concept is so well-received and tangible that F5A has received multiple donations to support the program since its inception. Make no mistake, F5A always welcomes additional supporters.

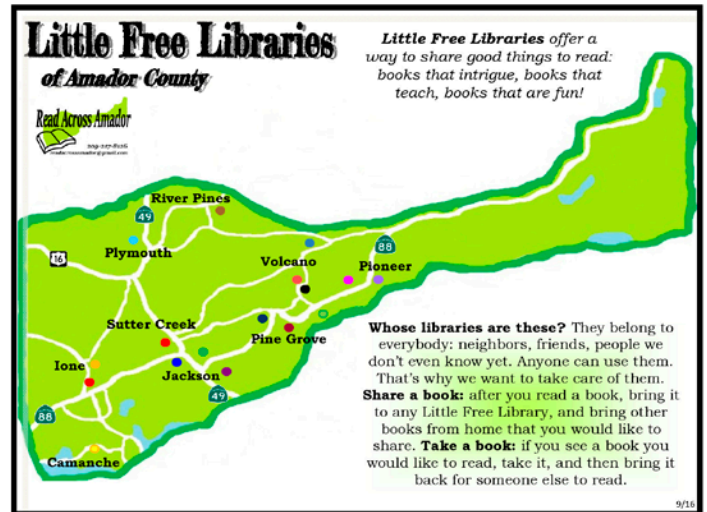


The Imagination Library requires that children be enrolled to receive their books and most children are registered through the [Baby Welcome Wagon](#), Amador’s universal home visiting program. Encouraging enrollment during a home visit helps to solidify participation during a

busy time for families. Families are able to enroll utilizing an Imagination Library brochure F5A makes available throughout the county or online by visiting [F5A’s website](#).

To date, over 1,400 children have received Imagination Library books which is about 60 percent of eligible children in Amador County. Also, in order to meet the needs of the community, many books are now provided in English and Spanish.

Beyond the Imagination Library, in order to create a literacy-rich community, F5A established a countywide coalition, Read Across Amador (RAA). RAA’s goal is to promote and expand literacy opportunities for all ages



by recruiting community-based organizations such as the Friends of the Library and elementary school leaders that helped brainstorm creative solutions.

RAA’s first project was to build on the success of a library grant that established four Little Free Libraries (LFLs) in unincorporated areas of the county. These micro-sized libraries resemble large bird houses (they do!) and provide a free give-and-take system that is now represented in 16 locations throughout the county.

Amador’s LFLs were built by a local woodworking club and are maintained by dedicated stewards. The LFLs are painted by elementary school children and F5A playgroups to give each LFL its own custom look. Putting their money where their mouth is, F5A is a steward to their own LFL, located in front of its offices. From their windows, they enjoy watching children and their families browse through the LFL and walk away with a book to share at home.

Amador’s LFLs can be found in parks, fire stations, the local Tribal TANF office, a small grocery store, and rural neighborhoods. With local satellite libraries only open a few hours per week, this system of sharing literacy for all ages is helping to create that community norm change, which is important to creating a “literacy-rich” community.

RAA’s most recent project is assembling book bags that contain a variety of age-specific books for foster care families and child welfare services cars.

With all of these services, programs, and more, First 5 Amador is proud to build “Gold Country” into a “Literacy-Rich” county. ✨

# 2016 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit Solidifies Speakers



The planning of the 2016 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit in Sacramento is in full-throttle mode. Scheduled for November 8–10, First 5 California has an extraordinary lineup of speakers this year, including Lt. Emada Tingirides of the Los Angeles Police Department, who will open the event with Jose Hernandez, former NASA astronaut.

Lt. Tingirides was raised by nurturing, strong women who helped her get through a difficult childhood to become a force in her community. Meanwhile, Mr. Hernandez, an electrical engineer, became the first migrant farm worker to become an astronaut.

Joining these speakers is Dr. Alison Gopnik. Professor Gopnik is an internationally recognized leader in the study of children's learning and development, and will address attendees during her keynote lunchtime presentation on November 9. She has authored several books, including *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*, and her latest book, *The Gardener and the Carpenter*.

Sylvia Acevedo will open on November 10 during the morning general session. Ms. Acevedo, an award-winning entrepreneur and executive with Fortune 100 companies, including Apple, Autodesk, and Dell, has earned worldwide recognition for her work in addressing one of society's most vexing challenges—universal access to education. Ms. Acevedo established distribution programs that provided over 250,000 books to families, many of which were the first books in their homes. She currently serves as a Commissioner on the White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

The Summit will conclude with Dr. Junlei Li, Associate Professor of Saint Vincent College and Co-Director, Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media. Dr. Li brings a wealth of early learning, psychology, and human and child development information to attendees during a lunchtime address and will conduct a special, post-Summit plenary workshop.

The Summit registration will open by early September and with our new, innovative online registration system, you will experience state-of-the-art technology at its finest! Attendees are required to create an account prior to registering for the Summit. You may visit the First 5 California Events site in advance to create your account, which takes less than a minute.

There is still time to [sponsor](#) the Summit—don't get left out. See you in November! ✨

## The following entities have sponsored the Summit:

- Heising-Simons Foundation
- KAPLAN
- First 5 Los Angeles
- Institute for Healthcare Advancement
- Los Angeles Universal Preschool
- Parents as Teachers
- Branagh Information Group
- Zobreus Medical Corporation

For more information on the Summit, please [email](#) the Summit organizers. ✨